Nation
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Val d'Or marches against racism

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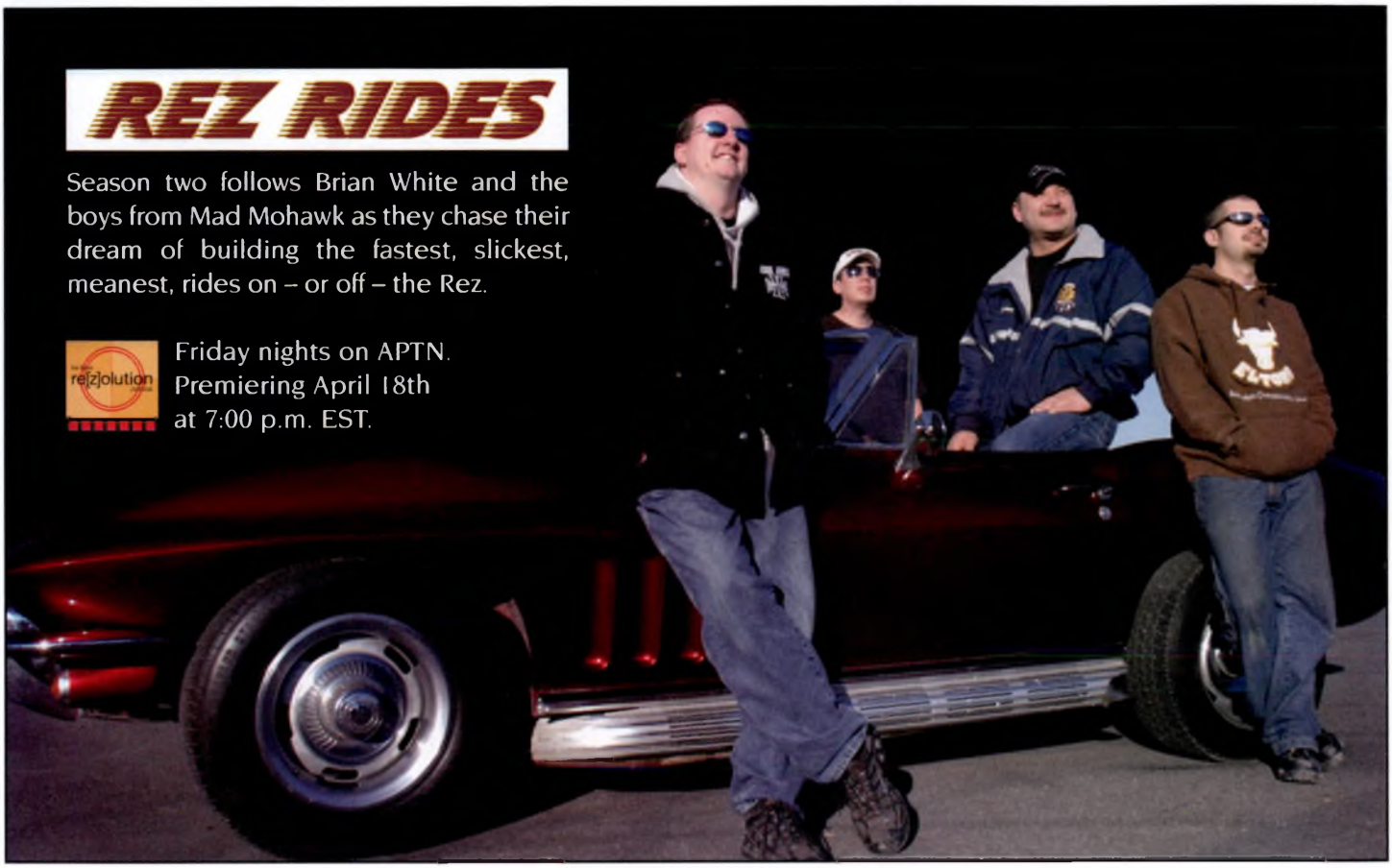

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First Nations First for Supplies and Services

Politics, Racism and Corporate Prisoners

by Will Nicholls

In this issue we have photos showing anti-racism and the progress that has been made in northern Quebec in the Val d'Or region. Unfortunately we also have photos of what I would describe as selective racism as well.

I am referring to the sentencing of a chief, four band councillors and a community member in Ontario to six months in prison. The jail time was handed down because the judge knew the six couldn't pay the huge fines he imposed on them for defending their traditional territory. He knew this because the court costs of $500,000 had bankrupted the First Nations community.

It all started when a mining exploration company wasn't allowed to just go ahead and mine disputed territory. The hopeful exploiters, Platinex, filed suit against the Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug (KI) First Nation and sued it for $10 billion. When this was found to be excessive Platinex dropped its suit to a mere $10 million.

The KI people believed in the Canadian justice system and went to court. All their actions were pretty peaceful.

However, they quickly discovered the price of a peaceful protest and a court case in Ontario is quite high. It comes down to all your money and your freedom. Unfortunately the jailings make armed blockades all the more attractive. If you are going to spend time in jail for peaceful protests, why not get involved in some action beforehand. What's the difference?

Many are calling the six Canada's latest political prisoners though they could rightly be called Corporate Canada's prisoners also.

Judge Smith said he regretted what he had to do but there was precedent for it as an Algonquin Nation leader Bob Lovelace was sentenced to six months and fined $25,000. The Crown prosecutors themselves didn't recommend incarceration.

It is a shame Judge Smith didn't look at the precedent that was set by Canada's Supreme Court that states corporations and governments have to consult with First Nations before anything is done on their land. Any Aboriginal can tell you that in the past laws and precedents have been conveniently forgotten or bypassed for profit. This may not be the case here but it is a question of whether or not a province can supercede a federal decision and law.

The Ontario government gave Platinex its permit, so shouldn't it have been the one to be sued? To be fair the Ontario government offered $200,000 towards the court costs and continued assistance if the chief and band councillors wished to appeal. Ontario also said it was disheartened by the ruling but couldn't interfere with the judicial system. Does this stop the Ontario government from revoking Platinex's permits to mine in the area? One would think not.

As for Platinex it has stated repeatedly how it is just a small company trying to make itself a little larger. In August 2006, Platinex alleged that the protest by the KI First Nation was hostile and threatening, and involved the seizure of equipment and the plowing of an airstrip. The KI First Nation alleged that the protest was peaceful and involved elderly members and children. Members of the Ontario Provincial Police were present and no one was arrested. Platinex lawyer Neal Smitheman said, "Platinex has done absolutely everything – more than any other exploration company that I am aware of – in terms of acting reasonably under the circumstances." He said Platinex has gone beyond what it had to do to make its project possible.

So who is to blame? Nobody seems to want these six leaders in jail but there they sit. With a vanishing exploration and exploitation base the mining companies are heading north with the message that any resistance against resource extraction will be met with jail time and costly penalties.

Lorraine Major, the chief of Northwest Angle First Nation, said, "I wish we could stand up for our rights without being jailed."

Canada's Anglican primate, Archbishop Fred Hiltz, said the jailing arises "out of the continual imposition of the power and values of colonizers."

Contents

editorial

Politics, Racism and Corporate Prisoners 3

rez notes

Of Hockey Nuts and Broom Balls 4

news

KI in dire straits 5

Something's sparkling 7

In brief 9

feature

Washaw Sibi Eeyou 10

March against racism 13

Conservative's Lise Kistabish 14

The Return of Canada goose 15

Woodland caribou under threat 17

Mining development 19

Letters 21

Under the Northern Sky

The dragonflies are coming 23

photo:
Paul Brind'amour

by Sonny Orr

Of Hockey Nuts and Broom Balls

One thing that I have noticed about any sport, and hockey in particular, is that the fans are divided, home team versus visiting team. It can be just as dangerous off ice as it is on ice. The stands, when the home team is nearing the goal, deafen the arena with a rush of screaming in all notes and pitches and can be remarkably silent when the opposition scores a sneaky yet legitimate goal past a wide-open net waiting gape, big enough to swallow a player or two. A few cheers from some unknown supporter quickly subside as heads turn in their general direction; that who could be so traitorous, you wonder?

The fans come in all ages and from everywhere in the province, it seemed at a recent multi-cultural event called the Whale Cup, a tourney where Inuit, Cree and non-Native collide together in the high-speed sport event. Come three o'clock in the morning, when dedicated fans just yawn instead of boo at the opposition and the score board indicates that both goalies have been sleeping for the last 20 goals scored against them garner yet more yawns, but hey, it's a sport eh?

Speaking of dedicated fans, some strangers were in town to observe and cheer their home town team on for the five-day long event and wished to have their identities withheld for security and privacy reasons but only to known as the #1 Hockey Fan in Eeyou Istchee (you know who you are, you avid and rabid Reznotes reader you). As you know, fans come in all sizes, shapes, forms and ages and it seemed that the teams were made up in the same way, until I noticed that the varied categories included some ex- hockey players (doesn't that mean you don't play anymore, or are you separated from your team by age or are you really just another hockey nut?) for those who wish not to hang their skates up.

Broom ball, once the maven of women who wished hockey was a women's sport and now it is, seems to be making a comeback with a show of force from the southern towns, forever reinforcing the fact that men and brooms just don't seem to mix, on or off the ice. Perhaps the future broom will be replaced with a new fangled extension rod to prod in the ball from long distances and perhaps a little suction cup at the end to keep the ball close to the broom, but hey, it's all for good fun isn't it?

I don't know, but the idea of someone batting around a ball with a broom just doesn't sink in with your Mr. Machismo here. Perhaps broom ball should remain the domain of the better half, but, hey, it's just my opinion.

All this excludes that old Scottish sport, where men wave brooms and knock rocks around, but hey, they invented whiskey and scotch, so they must know something or two about men's sports besides kicking each other in the shins and running downhill full tilt (really, that's the Scottish national sport).

But either way, hockey fans can borderline insanity, but hey, it's just a sport, right?

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PHOTOGRAPHY
S. Bonspiel, N. Diamond, W. Nicholls, D. Valade

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LAYOUT
R. Lawson

THANKS TO: Air Creebec

WHERE TO REACH US:
POSTMASTER:
The Nation PRODUCTION OFFICE
4529 CLARK, #403
MONTREAL, QC., H2T 2T3
EDITORIAL & ADS
TEL.: 514-272-3077, FAX: 514-278-9914
The Nation HEAD OFFICE
P.O. BOX 151, CHISASIBI, QC. J0M 1E0
www.beesum-communications.com
E-MAIL ADDRESS:
Editorial: nation@beesum-communications.com
news@beesum-communications.com
Ads: ads@beesum-communications.com
Classifieds: beesum@beesum-communications.com

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KI in dire straits

Tiny Ontario community continues to fight Ontario government, big business and the justice system

By Steve Bonspiel

The tiny Ojibwa/Cree community of Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug (KI), Ontario, is losing more control of its traditional territory as the exploration company Platinex has garnered support from Ontario and the provincial justice system. The latest saga in the battle for mining on KI's land has ended in a six-month jail term for its chief.

In a case which has been hailed as David (KI) versus Goliath (Platinex), Goliath has shown to have deeper pockets and the favour of the courts.

"We want our children and grandchildren to be able to continue our traditions of hunting, trapping and fishing," said KI spokesperson Sam McKay, who was one of six people who were sent to jail.

"We are not afraid to go to jail to protect the environment at the potential mining site, plus the surrounding area which includes our Kitchenuhmaykoosib."

The problem started a few years back when the potential of platinum deposits were said to have existed on the reserve's land, near Big Trout Lake, Ontario. The community had a moratorium on mining development, but Platinex continued to stake and drill the land.

The territory in question is 15kms from the actual community of 1200 and is currently under a land-claim dispute with the crown.

"Resource development hasn't worked in the past," David Peerla, mining coordinator for the Nishnawbe Aski Nation told *the Nation* at the time.

"There is a legacy of mines on the territory that haven't been cleaned up. In this particular case, there is concern that the exploration and drilling, and potentially a mine, will take place in a very sensitive watershed that drains into the Big Trout Lake, which is a critical part of their economy and activities.

"This project represents a very real environmental risk to their way of life," he said. "And they have unresolved land claims that haven't been addressed."

Platinex responded by sending in a negotiator, who happened to be an ex-British Army officer. It was seen by the community as a strong-arm tactic.

When Platinex was refused entry into the territory by KI, it launched a lawsuit totaling $10 billion, which Platinex lawyer Neil Smitheman said was the approximate value Platinex would "lose" over the course of the mine's life expectancy of 30 years. It was later reduced to $10 million, but that number was still enough to bankrupt the band council who are currently facing court fees totaling over $500,000.

"Part of what Platinex claimed in its litigation is it wants to create a treaty-free zone," said Peerla. "In other words it wants to create a big band, 8000 plus acres, of area where no one can exercise their Aboriginal treaty rights.

photos courtesy of www.kitchenuhmaykoosib.com

"It also wants to create a buffer around that area. Basically no one from the community would be able to get within 200 metres of this zone. This would be a dangerous precedent for Aboriginal treaty rights around the country," said Peerla.

On July 28, 2006, the Ontario Provincial Court granted an interim injunction to KI that was conditional on immediately establishing "a consultation committee charged with the responsibility of meeting with representatives of Platinex and the Provincial Crown with the objective of developing an agreement to allow Platinex to conduct its two-phase drilling project at Big Trout Lake."

An agreement was never reached and by April 2007, KI sought an interlocutory injunction that would prevent Platinex from any further exploratory drilling.

"Ontario came to the table to talk about how many holes would be drilled, it wasn't taking 'No' for an answer," said Chris Reid, KI's lawyer.

On May 1, 2007, the court dismissed the suit, but ordered Platinex to adhere to certain protocol before commencing phase one of its drilling program.

Chief Donny Morris and his councilors were charged with contempt of court on October 25, 2007 and five months later, on March 17, 2008, they were sentenced to six months in jail for refusing to comply with the court ruling to allow Platinex

continued on page 21

VETERINARY CLINIC 2008

Nemaska
Friday April 18 12:00 pm – 6:00 pm
Saturday April 19 8:00 am – 4:00 pm
Contact: George Swallow

Eastmain
Sunday April 20 8:00 am – 5:00 pm
Contact: George Cheezo

Wemindji
Monday April 21 12:00 pm – 6:00 pm
Tuesday April 22 8:00 am – 12:00 pm
Contact: Joey Georgekish

Waskaganish and Chisasibi
Week of May 16 - details coming in *the Nation*.
Contact Waskaganish: Michel Cloutier
Contact Chisasibi: Charles House

Mistissini
Saturday June 7 8:00 am – 6:00 pm
Sunday June 8 8:00 am – 6:00 pm

Ouje-Bougoumou
Monday June 9 8:00 am – 6:00 pm

Waswanipi
Tuesday June 10 10:00 am – 6:00 pm
Wednesday June 11 8:00 am – 6:00 pm

Why spay or neuter your dog?

- There are too many dogs without homes.
- It prevents puppies from being born in the harsh winter.
- Neutering males stops them from packing up on females and scaring children.
- Spaying your female means she will not come into heat. She will no longer be harassed by males or have more puppies.
- The surgery prevents females from dying while giving birth to puppies that are too big.
- Males are less likely to roam, show aggression or fight.
- Both males and females are calmer.

What is spaying and neutering?

- Spaying and neutering prevents male dogs from breeding and female dogs from producing puppies. They are methods of providing birth control for dogs by removing their reproductive organs, preventing them from having litters of puppies.
- Spaying is the procedure used for female dogs, while neutering refers to the procedure used for male dogs.

Spaying or neutering is good for your dog

- Spaying and neutering helps your dog live a longer, healthier life by reducing or eliminating many health problems that can be difficult to treat.
- Spaying and neutering make your dog a better companion and can make them less likely to bite.
- Spaying your female dog eliminates her heat cycle. Females in heat can cry incessantly, show nervous behaviour and attract unwanted male dogs.
- Neutering your male dog makes it less likely to roam the neighbourhood, run away or get into fights

Surgery takes at least 3 hours from drop off to pick up. Please bring animals to the clinic as early as possible so that the vets have time to work on them.

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Something's sparkling

The impact of a new diamond mine is being investigated

By Steve Bonspiel

There have been various minerals discovered and mined in Eeyou Istchee over the years and *the Nation* has now learned that diamonds could be added to the list after a recent announcement that Stornoway Diamond Corp. is trying to get a road built to access an area known as the Foxtrot Property.

The mine promises "200 to 300 jobs over 10 to 15 years," according to President Matt Manson.

Stornoway has partnered with the Quebec government's mining development agency, SOQUEM, and the results from a bulk sample program in 2007 proved promising, but it is still too early to put concrete numbers on jobs and the life expectancy of the mine.

"We're just finishing the pre-feasibility study," said Manson. "It will give us the first reasonably reliable estimate of the size of the resource and the cost parameters of the project and it will also give an indication of schedule."

Stornoway representatives are calling the Renard diamond project a "moderate-sized resource," and they figure it could be in operation in four to five years.

At a recent seminar on mining in Montreal, CEO Eira Thomas told the crowd that it was "not a question of if this road gets built. It's when."

"We're working with the company because it's only in the exploration stage right now," said Mistissini Chief John Longchap

"The environmental impact statement will have to consider employment and benefits for the Crees, but also environmental issues and cultural issues. If they address those issues then the province will issue a permit and we'll sit down to negotiate."

The project might be a boost for Mistissini's economy if enough Crees are hired on, but the road is also seen as a way to get better access for tourists to the Albanel-Témiscamie-Otish Park, a first of its kind to promote the boreal forest.

"It's also about better access for the tallyman," said Longchap.

The impact the mine will have on the land and the Cree way of life as well as who will pay the cost of the road has yet to be worked out, but a pre-feasibility study is due out as early as April 21 that will give more weight behind the economic numbers.

On that date, Longchap will again meet with the company to further discuss the project.

One of the proposals for funding the building of a highway includes a pay-per-use system. It would have to be built over bodies of water, including the Eastmain River, which also adds to the enormous cost, which has not been calculated yet.

A $900,000 feasibility study was ordered by a committee made up of Crees and MBJ mayors to gauge the cost of a road to the park. Quebec threw in $300,000 and the rest was earned through fundraising efforts.

The environmental impact statement will have to consider employment and benefits for the Crees, but also environmental issues and cultural issues.

Stornoway has also proposed a second stage of the road, running north of the Foxtrot Property to the Transtaiga highway that also needs to be studied.

Although continuing on with the project without a road is a possibility, Stornoway representatives say they would not want to go that route.

"We're strongly dependant upon the construction of a road," said Manson. "We're very optimistic we'll be able to build one and if we can't, we'll cross that bridge when we come to it."

The mine would have to undergo stringent scrutiny by the two Cree-Quebec boards of COMEV, which would examine and evaluate if the project is viable and feasible, and COMEX, which takes a look at environmental impacts as well as the impact on game, Cree way of life and any potential dangers associated with mining that may or may not be offset by economic gain.

"The tallyman will have a lot of bearing on whether they get a permit or not," said Longchap.

"We relate any future potential projects to the Troilus experience," he said, of the open-pit gold mine that opened in 1995 and is expected to last until 2009. "As long as it's not too destructive to the land it might be all right, but we haven't made a decision to support it or not."

Longchap also mentioned the possibility of the Troilus workers moving over to the Renard diamond mine if all goes well.

"Right now we're taking a wait and see approach, but if it doesn't have a negative impact on the tallyman and the traplines, it might be good for Mistissini," said Longchap.

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215, 3e Avenue
Val d'Or, Qc
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T: 819-825-0880
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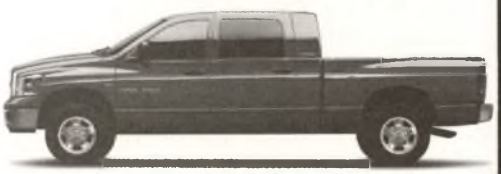

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Mistissini's Sports Complex wins prestigious award

The new Neoskweskau Sports Complex in Mistissini has won an award in the Mechanical Electrical Buildings category at the Annual Quebec Engineering Association Awards, March 27.

Mistissini picked up the award for the innovative geothermal heating system of the sports complex.

Mistissini Chief John Longchap says the geothermal technology they used can reduce energy consumption by up to 67%, over conventional heating methods.

After beating the five other projects up for the award in Quebec, the sports complex is automatically entered in the upcoming nationwide competition at the Annual Canadian Engineers' Awards in Quebec City in May 2008.

Chief Longchap says Mistissini "has one more reason to be proud of their community." Longchap hopes the win will encourage the use of the sports complex as well as the community to take care of it.

Second fire in Chisasibi in two months

A fire destroying the home of Tamela Bobbish and family is the second fire in Chisasibi within the past two months where the families involved lost everything.

According to the Bobbish family, one of their children was playing with matches in the basement at the time the fire started on Friday, March 28 at around 11 am.

All of the residents at 106 Wachiya Rd. managed to get out of the building without injury.

Chisasibi Fire Chief Archie Moar said the fire was in full force by the time the family was alerted by the smoke detector. "When a fire starts in the basement," he said "it goes up fast because the supports for the main floor are exposed."

Family members did not have time to put on their shoes, before they ran out of the building.

"This is a prime example that smoke detectors do save lives," said Moar.

For those wishing to donate money, clothing or other household items to Tamela Bobbish and her family, they can contact the Anglican Church of Eeyou Istchee at 819-855-3480, and speak to Church Treasurer Jimmy Fireman.

Rusty Cheezo, new Chief of Eastmain

Rusty Cheezo beat out Edward Gilpin with 145 votes to Gilpin's 111 to become Eastmain's new Chief. In the race for Deputy Chief, Johnny Tomatuk defeated incumbent John Brown by an overwhelming majority of 176 votes to Brown's 82 votes.

The March 20 and 21 election for Chief and Council of Eastmain also saw Kenneth Gilpin and Bessie Tomatuk elected as Councillors. Stanley Gilpin and Gregory Mayappo were tied at 26 votes apiece for the third Band Council position.

The third office of Councillor will be decided in another election on April 11.

The Eastmain election was called following former Chief Lloyd Mayappo's letter of resignation, tendered February 19.

UQAT to hold 6th Annual First Nations Symposium

The Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue will hold its 6th Annual First Nations Symposium on May 28 at the Forestel Hotel in Val-d'Or.

The symposium is designed to make participants aware of Native perspectives and realities. The hope is that this new awareness will encourage co-existence and co-operation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

If you are interested in attending the symposium, call Sylvie Basile at 819-874-3837 ext. 336, or email her at suzy.basile@uqat.ca for more information.

Correction

The Nation regrets that two photo credits were omitted from our last issue (Vol. 15, No. 10: March 28, 2008). The photos for the "Chantiers Chibougamau Blockade" (page 5) were courtesy of La Sentinelle newspaper, and the photos for "Montreal journalist Rupert Bottenberg introduces..." (page 21) were taken by Rupert Bottenberg.

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feature

Looking for recognition

The Washaw Sibi Eeyou long for their own community

By Steve Bonspiel

The Washaw Sibi Eeyou have struggled with many issues since the 1960's when the federal government placed them on lands belonging to a different nation and in doing so, effectively abandoned the people and their needs.

They have had to deal with racism, from the Algonquin and white people in Pikogan and Amos, loss of land, culture, language and identity and worst of all, they have no place to call home.

By most estimates, Washaw Sibi and its 400 member are roughly 4-7 years away from getting their own land base. The planning aspect and the construction of new houses as well as federal recognition as a band will finally right the wrong Ottawa committed when the Crees were lumped in with the Algonquins in Pikogan.

"The move is good for the youth who can be educated and get jobs," said Washaw Sibi Chief Billy Katapatuk. "But we'll still be able to practice our traditional way of life. We need them to be more involved in Washaw Sibi's future."

He said that with a land base, it will be easier for his population to deal with the various problems that plague every community, such as suicide, housing and job creation because with recognition comes core funding from the government and additional rights guaranteed under the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement.

"We will be able to establish things to help our people," he said. "We want to be like the other nine communities, how they get their funding and how they establish their housing and programs and the benefits they get as well."

Although it is unsure how much the move will cost, the Washaw Sibi constituents gave their leaders a clear path last May when they voted 55 to 42 in favour of relocating within an urban setting.

That important decision will save the band a lot of money as a move to a rural setting would have cost at least twice as much. Amos has already started to expand their water pipelines and sewer system to accommodate the move, according to Washaw Sibi.

On March 18 they hit a little bump on their road to a viable community of their own as the Algonquins from the Abitibiwinni First Nation in neighbouring Pikogan held a protest in front of the Washaw Sibi office.

Although it was brief, from 1 – 3:30 PM, Chief Katapatuk questioned their motives.

"They don't want anything else built on the territory, but non-native people are building all over," he said. "They still think they own the Temiscamingue area and the land."

Katapatuk said the government is to blame for the sticky situation both bands are in, not the Washaw Sibi people.

"It's not our problem what they went through," he said. "They should protest against the government, not us. The government made the mistake of putting Crees on their reserve. We just want our own rights and our own benefits. I don't know why they're against us."

Pikogan Chief Alice Jerome had a different spin on the incident. She looked at it more as a 'walk' rather than a protest.

"We didn't really protest; it was a peace walk," said Chief Jerome. "It was for Amos, just to say we are there and to respect our Algonquin territory. We want to respect others and we want respect at the same time."

Washaw Sibi Chief Billy Katapatuk

Although she did not explain why the walk took place directly in front of the Washaw Sibi offices, it showed the deep division that exists to this day between the two nations.

A meeting was held between Grand Chief Matthew Mukash and Chief Alice Jerome to address their concerns on April 1.

The problem started, according to Katapatuk, when the Algonquins signed a treaty in 1906 that gave up their right to the land. Years later the town of Amos sprung up. Since then they have had to deal with nothing but hardship and racism.

"We're going to continue to have a relationship with Washaw Sibi because they are in our territory," said Chief Jerome. "We just want peace and to continue to have good relations with them. There are a lot of Crees and

Algonquins mixed in our community and we want to keep it that way."

Therein lies the problem, according to most Washaw Sibi Cree. Since they were put onto another Nation's land and told to get along, there have been harrowing incidents of racism towards the Washaw Sibi people.

Former councillor Annie Weistche-Trapper told *the Nation* a few years ago of incidents where, as a youth, she would get rocks thrown at her by Algonquins who took offense to her mere presence.

> "THEY DON'T WANT ANYTHING ELSE BUILT ON THE TERRITORY, BUT NON-NATIVE PEOPLE ARE BUILDING ALL OVER."

She also mentioned that the worst perpetrators against her as a child were the adults.

Pikogan also stands to lose membership if Washaw Sibi becomes a federally recognized band. That would mean less money for their day to day operations and health and education. In other words, the band would actually get poorer if people with roots in both communities choose to join the Washaw Sibi community.

Chief Katapatuk said that an offer stands, put forth by the Algonquins, to live side by side with them when they relocate. According to Washaw Sibi Advisor Paul Wertman, that would not be a viable option.

Wertman said that Pikogan is using Whapmagoostui and Kuujuarapik as a model of how two communities can live side by side.

"In our view it's a very different situation," he said. "They are two distinct cultural groups, but both are covered by the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement. They have roughly the same standard of living. To think you can duplicate that situation is potentially dangerous.

"Essentially what you would have is one community governed by the Indian Act and another one governed by the Cree-Naskapi Act and the JBNQA. You would have two communities side by side with substantially different standards of living. From the point of view of sociological factors, that is a recipe for disaster. It would breed a lot of hostility and it would not work from Washaw Sibi's perspective."

Wertman added that Washaw Sibi has gone above and beyond in their approach to the Pikogan Algonquins, going so far as suggesting an ad-hoc committee be set up to settle various disputes to promote a harmonious future between the two bands.

"For the last four or five years Washaw Sibi has made extraordinary efforts to try and create the basis for a mutually respectful relationship between the two communities," said Wertman. "They recognize that there will be impacts on Abitibiwinni with the establishment of the new village."

Here is a brief timeline that illustrates Washaw Sibi's approach to the Algonquins:

- 2003-04 – Washaw Sibi approached Algonquin Elder William Commanda and told him about establishing a village. They asked him to act as mediator during discussions. He said yes. Previous Chief Harry MacDougall did not follow through.
- 2005 – Washaw Sibi drafts a treaty of friendship and cooperation – attempting to do the same thing once again. It bases itself on mutual respect between First Nations and its objective is to create an ongoing dialogue to address issues of mutual concern. It was not accepted by MacDougall either.
- 2008 - Washaw Sibi is offering to set up a permanent Washaw Sibi-Abitibiwinni working group. To identify areas such as employment, where there could be opportunities that arise from the construction of a new Washaw Sibi village. It could be a forum for other joint economic and cultural undertakings that would benefit each community. They have not yet received an answer.

"We could agree on certain things, but also respectfully agree to disagree as well," said Wertman.

> "THE MOVE IS GOOD FOR THE YOUTH WHO CAN BE EDUCATED AND GET JOBS."

"The current problems are a legacy of the colonial approach to First Nations across the country that forces them to fight over scarce resources."

Wertman told *the Nation* that one of the big problems initially was getting on the radar screen of the federal government. The $1.4 billion agreement signed between the Crees and Canada this year has helped to push forth the Washaw Sibi plight. The Grand Council has now been given the responsibility to find the Washaw Sibi Eeyou a place to live and to pay the costs of the move.

The GCC has already recognized Washaw Sibi as the tenth Cree community.

"Washaw Sibi has done a tremendous job of positioning themselves politically and strategically so that they can, in a relatively short while, realize the dream that they and their Elders have had for quite a long time," said Wertman. "It's an occasion for great optimism."

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March against racism

Photos by Paul Brind'amour

The Gabriel-Commanda Walk on March 20 gathered some 1000 people in the streets of Val-d'Or, in spite of freezing weather, to say "No" to racism, in response to the Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre's invitation. The 8th edition of the Walk marked the high point of the Awareness Week for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. It was a well-filled week that focused on partnerships.

With this recurring campaign uniting innovative activities, Val-d'Or has become a testimonial on the national scene when talking about racial discrimination awareness. A campaign of this scope, registered in the frame of an international movement and led under the leadership of First Nations people, confirms the pioneering character of Val-d'Or and its uniqueness in Quebec, if not Canada. With its 32,000 inhabitants, Val-d'Or is one of the rare towns of its size to successfully lead such a campaign, usually reserved for large urban centres.

The Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre is however very proud of the population's response to this big annual solidarity rendezvous that is the Gabriel-Commanda Walk, and of all the collaborations that made this event a great success. This year, several regional partnerships were furthered and the Awareness Week is on the verge of becoming a real action week, actions undertaken by an ensemble of groups that say strong and loud "no to racism in Val-d'Or" and that continue the work in their respective fields: municipal politics, community, schools, childcare services, regional politics, business world and Aboriginal organizations.

Turning Blue

Lise Kistabish is Conservative Party choice for Abitibi-Témiscamingue riding

By Amy German

Though there may not be a federal election for some time to come, Lise Kistabish, an Algonquin from Pikogan, entered uncharted territory last February 20 when she became the Conservative Party candidate in the Abitibi-Témiscamingue riding.

Though there were four others originally vying for the coveted position, Kistabish said, "I won by acclamation. Everybody was in favour that I was the best candidate."

At the moment, Kistabish is wearing two hats. She is still the Director General of the Abitibiwinni First Nation Council, where she has worked since 1995, and now she is a future politician. Though administrating and politicking may not be the same thing, they share similarities.

"I have been working with the regional Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador and the Assembly of First Nations so the federal government and federal policies are not something new for me. They are something that I deal with every day."

Lise Kistabish

> "THE CONSERVATIVES DON'T WORK UNIFORMLY, THEY DON'T APPLY ONE (PARTICULAR) THING ACROSS CANADA... **THE CONSERVATIVES ARE OPEN TO WORKING ON THE INDIVIDUAL NEEDS OF EACH REGION."**

While it seem strange for an Aboriginal woman to join the Conservatives at a time when the party is under fire for its treatment of Canada's Aboriginal people, Kistabish doesn't see it that way. "I think we are in a position to really work with the Conservatives instead of just being confrontational. We need to understand the side of First Nations and also the side of the Conservatives. I think we can manage to work together," said Kistabish.

By the same token, she also acknowledges the fact that being in politics is more effective when you're in the party that's in power. "In our riding, the race is going to be between the Conservatives and the Bloc Québécois and the election is going to be a challenge," said Kistabish.

When asked what in particular attracted her to the Conservative Party, Kistabish responded, "The Conservatives don't work uniformly, they don't apply one (particular) thing across Canada. They are willing to apply individual strategies per region. Something that they apply in Alberta, they will not apply in Quebec and vice versa. The Conservatives are open to working on the individual needs of each region. Sure they can't meet every need but they are at least trying to meet the needs."

The Algonquins are among some of the most marginalized Aboriginal communities in Quebec with some living in mouldy plywood homes and others living in communities without electricity. When asked what she and the Conservative Party could do for them, Kistabish's response was interesting. "First of all, I think that the willingness of the community is a priority because you know there are some concessions that need to be made on either side. The First Nations people need to make concessions and the government needs to make concessions. It is at that level that we need to work to be able to find common ground. If there are no concessions made on either side, nothing is going to happen," she said. Her plan is to go to her people and speak to them first-hand to see what she can do.

When Kistabish joined the Conservatives, her first question to them was in regards to their adamant refusal to adopt the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People and to instead side with nations known for their human-rights abuses. Though she may not necessarily agree with the decision, she did defend it. "If they did not vote for it, they had their reasons. They thought that we are not at the same level as these underdeveloped nations. They are the same kinds of reasons like, for example, if a chief would not want to accept a declaration because it did not fit with the tribe's image."

For now the 41-year-old is still getting used to her new role and is looking to connect with the people of Abitibi-Témiscamingue just as she did in her last position. "I will be there for them and I want them to be assured that I am not disconnected from them," said Kistabish. Look for her the next time a federal election rolls around.

The Return of Canada goose

By Ron Sheshamush

It is early May and the sun is setting to the west and painting the landscape to the east with reddish and yellowish colours. There is no sign of cloud and not a breath of wind. Somewhere over the ancient land of the Cree, a squadron of Canada Geese fly in a V-shaped formation towards their breeding grounds north. As each goose flaps its wings it increases uplift for weaker geese behind and they add 71 percent more flying range.

As they fly past an unnamed lake, they come upon a heavily forested mountain to the north and the leader increases its angle of attack and the flock begins to climb with him to negotiate the obstacle together. At approximately 1500 feet above sea level they level off and set for cruising speed. As they pass the rugged hill top, one gander spots a flock of geese resting in open water about a half a mile up ahead. The others see the party. They break from the formation and drop to lower altitudes by rolling and banking left and right in all directions. By performing these aerodynamic manoeuvres the air under their wings slips out and allows them to drop down 10 feet per roll. Some exceed angles of more than 90 degrees. They approach from the south and the party below starts calling them in. The flock circles overhead and makes its approach from the east. On the final approach, at about 100 feet above ground level, something spooks them. They immediately over-shoot and fly past the welcoming party.

They are called back and one younger goose is sent back by the commander to check if it is a safe haven to roost. He splashes down in the front of the group. He looks in all directions and sees nothing unusual. The others make a tight, right turn just above the spruce-tree tops for another run to final approach. They extend the landing gear and their wings lock for landing. They splash down gently in the cold, spring waters and come to a halt near the resting geese. They gather closely and swim upstream together. Just as things seem all right they see something in the midst of thick willows, and then…BANG!! BANG!!! BANG!!! Shots are fired. Hundreds of shot pellets slam into them and some hit the plastics. The geese take off in all directions and fly away honking. Several are hit and some wounded. The smell of gunpowder fills the air.

After the ground assault, the guilty one in camouflage apparel jumps out from the blind made out of natural cover by the waters edge and yells, "Yahoo!" That's me, Ron. Right next to me is my cousin Joshua Kawapit Sr. He stands up and removes his white cap and scratches his head with his mouth wide-open. He is uncertain of what had just happened. He's a little slow. The other younger man, my brother Elijah, comes flying out from his blind and removes his hunting hat made in Taiwan and stomps on it several times cursing and swearing. Clearly we all know he missed his shot. He's a terrible shot. No offence, but true.

I pull up my green hip-waders by Acton, and walk into the water to retrieve the kill. We place the Canada Geese on the partially snow-covered ground and tie the wings together using one feather from each wing to show respect to the bird. I drop on my knees and take one goose and I close my eyes and give thanks to God for this magnificent waterfowl. I take its left wing and hold five of the long, glossy black quills and shake it as if I were shaking the hand of this bird. I then say to it, "Thank you. Thank you for your return." It is a promise the goose keeps every spring. For some they could not wait for the return of Canada Goose for God has asked them to come home now. And I will not weep for them for I know they are in a much happier and wonderful place. God bless.

Have a happy and safe goose break everyone.

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Present range of the Woodland caribou

Protecting the game

The Woodland caribou under threat

By Manon Legault

The Woodland caribou lives in the boreal forest, a 10,000-year-old ecosystem which stretches from British Columbia and the Yukon all the way to Labrador and Newfoundland. The migratory caribou of northern Quebec and Labrador are comprised of two herds: the Leaf herd and the George River herd. Together they make up more than 600,000 of the total Woodland caribou population of 2.4 million in Canada.

In most provinces, the Woodland caribou is considered threatened (a threatened species is likely to become endangered in Canada if the factors affecting its vulnerability are not reversed) or endangered (a species threatened with imminent extinction or extirpation throughout all or a significant portion of its Canadian range) by the Species at Risk Act public registry (SARA) and the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC). The Quebec government considers its herds vulnerable, or "particularly at risk because of low or declining numbers, small range or for some other reason, without being threatened."

Although the numbers of caribou in northern Quebec seem high, it is not so much the herds as their environment that we need to worry about. According to the Sierra Club, "Woodland caribou need very large ranges, on average 9000 km2 per herd, to thrive. They do not adapt to changes in the forest caused by activities like forestry, mining and energy development. Even low levels of industrial development within a Woodland caribou range may threaten the viability of a herd."

Although the provincial government speaks of programs to observe caribou herds to see what they can do to help them, the logging industry continues to cut down over 290,000 hectares of Quebec forest each year. Greenpeace states that "Approximately half the boreal forest has been allocated or licensed to logging companies. The heaviest development is concentrated in the south, which is the most productive wildlife habitat. A disappearing forest means increased threats to the survival of the species that inhabits it."

Habitat degradation, which is caused in part by human development where the Woodland caribou live, can be something as simple as building a road. As a result, other species can lose their habitat. For example, White-tailed deer have been found on caribou territory because they have lost part of their habitat. They transmit a disease called meningeal brain worm, which kills the caribou, but does not affect the deer. Woodland caribou also have, as a result of habitat loss, more trouble avoiding predators like human beings, wolves, bears and coyotes. Moreover, because lichen grows in old growth forests, habitat degradation puts the Woodland caribou at risk, since it is its only food source throughout the winter season.

Climate change is another threat to the boreal forest, and, in turn, to the caribou. Scientists are predicting the forest will become warmer, causing more forest fires and outbreaks of insects like warble flies, mosquitoes and black flies. Hinterland Who's Who states that "Recently, there has been a lot of concern about the potential impact of climate change on caribou, especially in the north. Deeper snow, faster spring melt, warmer summers, freezing rain, and the high annual variability of all these factors will have an impact on the ability of the species to thrive in its environment."

Government programs are vague and will take many years to yield results, but there is hope out there. Three environmental groups – Nature Québec, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) and Réseau québécois des groupes écologistes (RQGE) – have reached a cooperative agreement with the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Sustainable Development Institute (FNQLSDI) to better protect the boreal forest, to establish a real network of protected areas, to protect endangered species like the caribou, and to practice sustainable forest activities. Greenpeace does a great deal of work to stop logging in the boreal forest by pulp-and-paper companies like Abitibi-Consolidated, Bowater and Kruger, who are wiping out the last intact areas of the boreal forest and trashing habitat where threatened wildlife lives. CPAWS is campaigning in every province to establish new protected areas over the next 10 years that will ensure the caribou's survival. These are just a few of the organizations that are trying to save the boreal forest and Woodland caribou.

The Woodland caribou have been forced from 50% of their land in Canada. For the past 110 years, they have lost 35,000 km2 of range every decade. Something has to be done. Waiting for the government to do something is not an option. They are only starting to observe the Newfoundland Woodland caribou, whose numbers have fallen from 90,000 to 37,000 in the last 10 years. Let's not let this happen to the Quebec caribou. Let's protect them and preserve their habitat.

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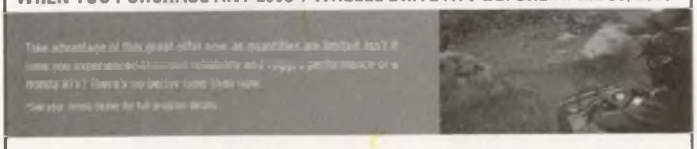

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Working together

A proactive approach leads to cooperation in mining development

by Xavier Kataquapit

A proactive approach by Northgate Minerals Corporation has resulted in a cooperative relationship with the Matachewan First Nation of Ontario concerning the development of the Young Davidson mine. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signing ceremony was held in Matachewan First Nation on Tuesday March 25 and it included signatories from the First Nation, Wabun Tribal Council and Northgate Minerals.

Northgate Minerals made a decision early on in their Young Davidson mining venture to consult with and involve Matachewan First Nation.

The MOU sets the agenda for conducting negotiations for an Impact Benefit Agreement (IBA) which will include such topics as employment, training, business opportunities and financials.

"Northgate's corporate goal is to find, develop and operate mines in an environmentally responsible and socially sustainable fashion, while providing economic benefits to the surrounding community and an appropriate rate of return to Northgate's shareholders. Right from the start of the Young Davidson Project, a major part of our efforts has been focused on the development of a special relationship with the Matachewan First Nation," said Chris Rockingham, Vice President, Business Development and Exploration, Northgate Minerals.

Matachewan First Nation Chief Elenore Hendrix and her First Nation Council have been involved with the developments at the Young Davidson mine for more than a decade.

"We are very happy with the positive and progressive initiatives taken by Northgate Minerals in involving and negotiating with our First Nation. For so many years our people have been overlooked in resource developments that have taken place on our traditional lands, so it really is reassuring to be closely involved with Northgate's development nearby," said Chief Hendrix.

Wabun Tribal Council Executive Director Shawn Batise, who is also a member of Matachewan First Nation, said, "This is a new age in terms of opportunities for First Nations and we are resolved to make the most of it. At the same we are also committed to working with our partners to ensure that the utmost is done in terms of environmental, safety and benefit issues. This kind of promise brings hope to our First Nations and in the long term our members will incur benefits far into the future."

The Young-Davidson mine site, which is located 15 kilometers south of the First Nation, is a well-established gold mine site that from the early 1930s to the 1950s generated over a million ounces of gold and processed almost 10 million tonnes of ore. After this early boom was over, there was sporadic exploration and some small-scale mining in the area.

Chief Elenore Hendrix of Matachewan First Nation and Chris Rockingham, Vice President, Business Development And Exploration, Northgate Minerals.

Shawn Batise, Executive Director of Wabun Tribal Council being interviewed during the signing event by Dave McGowan, MCTV News.

In November 2005, Northgate Minerals acquired the Young Davidson property. The company actually began consultations with Matachewan First Nation before acquiring the new property. Previous draft agreements regarding the Young Davidson property and Matachewan First Nation were updated and redeveloped to establish a better working relationship.

The Young Davidson mine is presently in what is known as an advanced exploration and engineering stage. Currently, the company is working on a pre-feasibility study for future development with a planned start-up date of 2010 and a projected 10-year-or-longer mine life. The fully operational mine is expected to have a target annual output of 150,000 to 200,000 ounces of gold minerals per year.

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KI in dire straights continued from page 5

to continue with its explorative work. They had set up a peaceful camp to keep workers out of their territory.

A motion to appeal will be brought before the courts in "a couple of weeks," according to Reid.

"If they (KI) say they don't want any development on their territory, the government says 'that's not an option,'" said Reid. "The only thing it wants to discuss is where the drilling will take place and how much of a share the band will get," said Reid, who added that in his opinion, the province of Ontario is unfairly favouring the mining companies over Aboriginal rights and concerns.

Aboriginal Nations are supposed to be guaranteed, by a Supreme Court of Canada decree, the right to be consulted and accommodated on development on their territory, even if it is under a land-claim dispute. However, a provision in the ruling states that First Nations do not have veto power and if the province sees fit to allow mining activity, it can do so.

Reid said that a test case could be made out of the jail terms to try and make the Supreme Court's ruling about consulting Aboriginals for exploration clearer and fairer to Aboriginal groups. However, KI did not have the resources or the desire to be dragged into a lengthy and costly legal battle at this time.

"Not every problem can or should be solved through the courts," he said. "Ontario could sit down and lay out what parts of the province are off limits to the mining industry. It chose not to because it wants to show that it is an ally of the mining industry, who will do whatever the industry wants it to do."

On February 15, Robert Lovelace, former Chief of the Ardoch Algonquin First Nation in Ontario, was sentenced to six months in prison, plus $25,000 in fines, for refusing to obey a similar injunction.

Adroch land was staked and exploratory drilling approved by Ontario without consultation. Along with KI, Adroch has proposed a joint panel to recommend new approaches to mineral exploration on First Nations' lands. Ontario premier Dalton McGuinty has yet to formally respond.

According to its website, "Platinex is a Canadian exploration company based near Toronto that focuses on carefully selected Platinum Group Element targets." Platinex lawyer Neil Smitheman said that for his fledgling company, time is of the essence.

"If we can't get on the property, we're doomed," said Smitheman. "We simply want to get on with what we're doing and not get caught in this political football game with respect to land claims. It really has nothing to do with us, but we feel effectively that we're a pawn between Ottawa, Queen's Park and the First Nations."

KI has gotten support from Aboriginal groups across the country.

"In one breath we hear Ontario talk about the importance of First Nations sharing in the wealth of the province's resource revenues, and in the next breath they ignore Supreme Court of Canada rulings that say we need to be consulted by companies wanting to exploit our lands," said Anishinabek Nation Deputy Chief Glen Hare.

"Meaningful consultation involves mutual respect, and not simply telling First Nations where you're going to drill for ore or clear-cut forests. That's not how good neighbours behave," he said.

"In the event that this dangerously provocative trend continues, it will certainly provoke an ugly backlash of unprecedented proportions," Grand Chief of the Union of B.C. Chiefs Stewart Phillip said. "Given these startling developments, what does the future hold for the First Nations of Ontario? Internment camps?"

letters

Foundations: What makes a good leader?

Cheryl Tomatuk-Bagan's insights and opinions regarding leadership (Vol. 15 No 10, March 28, 2008) will hopefully prompt leaders to critique the fashion in which they represent their constituents. Individuals who retain high-profile positions within the Cree entities must remember being elected or appointed to sit as an authority figure puts the same responsibility on any electee/appointee to represent their membership well. If all representatives based their decision-making, deliberation process and contribution to discussion with the mentality that they will work toward the greater good of their people; then Eeyou Istchee is bound to prosper under responsible leaders who remain accountable to the people they represent.

Those of us having the privilege of voting on issues or electing leadership - need also keep in mind that the leaders we elect today will likely impact generations of our people yet unborn. Voters have a responsibility to elect individuals who provide vision, clarity and direction, and who work for the greater good of the people rather than the greater good of self. Therefore, as conscientious individuals who express our views through our votes we must take serious consideration of all the issues raised by Cheryl Tomatuk-Bagan.

Next, *the Nation* has finally published an article that stimulates the creative thought process and appears more applicable or relevant to the readership than say "Will on the Grill" or "Movie Reviews." My intent is not to insult the authors of these two quoted articles, but to emphasize that *the Nation* needs to remain cognizant of their audience's place of residence, and that many people within Eeyou Istchee still prefer the traditional diet over store-bought packaged meat.

In closing, I encourage the staff at *the Nation* to support Cree writers by continuing to publish such thought-provoking articles, like the one written by Cheryl Tomatuk-Bagan.

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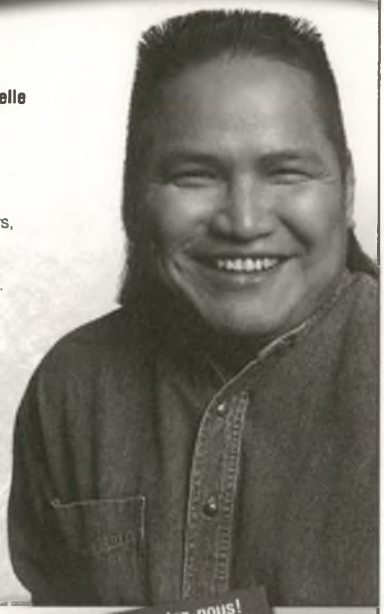

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ENERGY WISE

UNDER THE NORTHERN SKY

The dragonflies are coming

by Xavier Kataquapit

I took a short walk this early spring afternoon. Even though I was surrounded by huge snow-banks, I had the feeling that spring was in the air. The sun was shining bright but a cool breeze reminded me that winter was not leaving without a fight. On the ground, the ice was giving way to patches and holes of dark-coloured pavement, dirt and sand. Water was pooling in every depression, pothole and crevice as it slowly trickled down the street. There was also the familiar scent of spring, which for me is a mix of cool humid air with the light smell of the earth and the trees coming back to life. Big black ravens squawked and cawed to each other seeming to comment on the flurry of activity on the street.

At one point I heard the percussive beat of a helicopter flying overhead. It must have been the surroundings and the spring air in harmony with the sound of this aircraft that immediately brought me back to a time on the James Bay coast. That steady beat of a rotor cutting through the air is a sure sign of spring up the coast. These aircraft are seldom used in the wintertime as snowmobiles are more readily available and affordable for travelling on the land. In the summer, it is more economical to use a freighter canoe to travel along the coast. However, in the spring, the melting landscape of ice and snow becomes a dangerous surface to travel on. When land travel is perilous the helicopter is the only way to travel at times in the spring.

This aircraft became popular in the 1980s up the coast for use during the spring goose hunt. We called this flying wonder a "Chee-koo-nah-moo-shee-sh", which literally translates into Cree as dragonfly. There is no traditional word for this modern machine in our Cree vocabulary so it was easily given its Cree name due to its long tail and what looked like transparent wings when it flew through the air.

As I continued my walk downtown, I did so with the sound of the helicopter in the background and past images of the community airport in Attawapiskat. I remember being at the airport with my friends to watch the coming and going of the helicopter during the spring goose hunt. Hunters arrived at the airport dressed for the cold weather in parkas, mitts and snow boots. They seemed out of place in the warm weather and gravel surface in the midst of the spring thaw in the community. They loaded up hunting gear, tents, tarps and camping equipment into the cargo hold of the helicopter and then two or three burly men climbed aboard along with the pilot. If it was a good season, my friends and I knew that more than one chopper would fly in and out all day ferrying hunters and their equipment from the community to the hunting camps. It was exciting to watch the turbulent cloud of dust and sand that the helicopter created and to listen to the loud steady pulsating noise of the spinning rotors.

Another memory that comes to mind when I hear a helicopter surrounds the excitement and anticipation of the spring breakup. As soon as the warning of the spring breakup went through our community, a helicopter was brought north to survey the situation from the air. Elders and traditional people were flown up and down the river to show them where the ice was damming, where it was breaking and how the snow was melting in the forests and mushkeg. Most of the community members spent their time by the riverside and we all eagerly anticipated every return flight of the helicopter because we knew it brought another report of what to expect. To us a helicopter flying overhead during breakup signaled either news that the river was moving freely and there was no danger or the bad news that the ice had dammed the flow of water and that the notice for evacuation would soon follow.

I remember one bad spring breakup that worried our community in the 1980s. As a child in this situation, I can recall everyone being on edge as to whether the water was coming or not. We were warned by our Elders not to venture far from home and to not dare go near the river. In the midst of this nervous anticipation, the sound of a helicopter was a constant reminder that we were all under the mercy of the river.

After several days of waiting there came a notice for evacuation. We were given the choice of either flying south to other communities along the coast or even further to shelters in major cities. We were also given the option of being flown by helicopter to our hunting camps in the wilderness where we would be safe from flooding. Mom and dad chose to take us to one of the islands on the bay which was safe from any danger and we spent the next two weeks taking in a few more days of goose hunting and enjoying long walks along the pebble shores of Twin Island.

The whole time we were there, we could hear the distant thumping of helicopters ferrying people all along the bay or Elders to the mouth of the river to survey the breakup. That sound quickly puts me into high anticipation and a kind of anxiety with the memories of danger and adventure during breakup. It's that time of year again and the dragonflies are coming.

SM*i*

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CLASSIFIEDS

BIRTHDAYS

On Easter Sunday, it was April 11th, a little girl was born to my sister 4 years ago. We gave her a nick name "Easter Bunnysh". It's already been 4 years, my how time flies. Happy birthday and many more to come from your Auntie in Mistissini, Dina and your cousin Melissa. By the way, she says "ouwan mayoushid? and her answer is nee. With love and kisses.

I would like to wish Eric Pien a Happy Birthday. Hope you enjoy ur day as much as I enjoy having you around! Bonne Fete et je t'embrasse!! Wilmalee.

A belated Birthday wish goes out to my very special niece Naomi Iserhoff on April 01. We wish you all the best throughout the years. Naomi, always remember that I love you very much, since you grew up to be the one and only child of my sister's family. Once again, Happy B-day. Love & P.S., Aunt Hattie & Johnny, JP, Tris, Ben, Pat, little Trin. (Waswanipi) Also Birthday greetings to our precious grandaughter. Trinity Blacksmith-MartinHunter. Her 2nd Birthday is on April 4. We wish you were here with us on your birthday, but you are miles and miles away. (Chisasibi). We'll give you a call on your special day. We love and miss you so much. The house is so quiet without you. Hopefully you come to see us soon. BIG HUGS and KISSES, love always, Grandma & Grandpa, Uncles J.P, Tristan, Benoit. Last but not least, to our son Tristan B/smith a Happy sweet 16th Birthday on April 10. Enjoy your B-day Tris. Pretty sure you'll like your Birthday gift, a special gift you deserve to have for goose break. Love, Mom & Dad.

I just wanted to wish a happy belated 19th birthday to my nephew, Joey Freddie Jacques Solomon Seymour Capassisit Lacroix...lol! I just had to write ur whole name down..lol!....and wanted to tell you that I LOVE YOU VERY MUCH MY BOY...lots of love auntie, mom Ellen Capassisit. xoxoxoxoxoxoxoxoxoxox

We would like to wish a happy 18th birthday to Sharon Diamond. Hope you enjoy your day, wherever you are. Take good care of baby Layla'sh. We love you guys so much, from moi, Darlene and Alayna Joy, Wask.

I would like to wish my mother Annie Diamond a happy belated birthday on March 22. Happy birthday Mom, and I love you even though I don't say it much. From moi, Darlene and Alayna ank.

I would like to wish my little girl her 2nd birthday on March 27. Alayna Joy Diamond Moar, may your day be just as special as you are. Once again, happy birthday and I love you soo much. Have fun blowing out your two candles and eat all the cake you want..lol. Love always, your mom Darlene Diamond.

We would like to wish a Happy Belated birthday to our son, brother Leslie Mayappo jr. on March 25, 2008. From mom and dad and your sisters Anita & Christina'sh (Wemindji).

Happy Birthday to Anita Swallow on April 3, 2008 and many more to come. Hope you'll enjoy your day. From mom & dad and your siblings Les jr and Christina'sh (Wemindji).

I would like to wish my namesake Jaedon Christopher Keion Lane a Happy 6th Birthday on April 8th. Hope you enjoy your special day Jae!...Love you lots!...Betty.

Happy Birthday Jaedon! (My bodyguard)....Love your Cuz Kaedon and of course from Koty too! xoxoxo

IN MEMORIUM

In Loving Memory of my Late Brother, Scott Ira John Neeposh. Days gone by; Turned into weeks; Then into months; I can't believe; It's already been a year; It still hurts that you're gone; But with each passing moment I thank God for the memories we shared; I will never forget the sound of your voice, the way you laughed, the look on your face and the sparkle in your eyes; Though you're gone; In my heart you're memory will live on; I miss you and I love you and 'til we meet again, see you in my dreams. Wilmalee Neeposh (Waswanipi). It will be one year since he passed on April 22nd.

HOLIDAY GREETINGS

Hello! Greeting to all my relatives in Chisasibi. It's that time of the year when we all look forward to the return of our geese. I want to wish you all a safe and happy hunt. Enjoy your time on our land. Eric Cheechoo.

I would like to wish my family a happy Easter and I miss them all so much! I hope you all had a great time and a wonderful long weekend... I love you and see you when I get home for the summer. Love: Nikki B.

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Gambling: help and reference: 1-800-265-2626 (www.info-reference.qc.ca)

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Health and Sexuality resources center: 1-888-855-7432 (Monday to Friday, 9 am to 5 pm) (www.criss.org)

Gay Helpline: 1-888-505-1010 (Monday to Friday, 8 am to 3 am and Saturday-Sunday, 11 am to 3 am)

The Native Women's Shelter of Montreal: 1-866-403-4688. (www.nwsm.info)

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For those interested in applying contact your local Niskamoon Coordinator for an application form or Marc Dunn, Program Coordinator, at 514-861-5837 or by e-mail: mdunn@niskamoon.org.

Deadline for applications is May 1, 2008.

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